



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

Santa Clara Conduit Inspection and Rehabilitation and Pacheco Sectionalizing Valve and Acoustic Fiber Optic Repair Project

**Finding of No Significant Impact
CGB-FONSI-2022-019**

Mission Statements

The U.S. Department of the Interior protects and manages the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage; provides scientific and other information about those resources; and honors its trust responsibilities or special commitments to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated Island Communities.

The mission of the Bureau of Reclamation is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

South-Central California Area Office, Fresno, California

CGB-FONSI-2022-019

**Santa Clara Conduit Inspection and
Rehabilitation and Pacheco Sectionalizing Valve
and Acoustic Fiber Optic Repair Project**

Prepared by: Brian R. Lopez
Natural Resources Specialist

Concurred by: Rebecca L. Bernard
Wildlife Biologist

Concurred by: Rain L. Emerson
Environmental Compliance Branch Chief

Approved by: Michael P. Jackson, P.E.
Area Manager

Introduction

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) prepared this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) which is supported by Reclamation's attached Environmental Assessment (EA) CGB-EA-2022-019, *Santa Clara Conduit Inspection and Rehabilitation and Pacheco Sectionalizing Valve and Acoustic Fiber Optic Repair Project*, hereby incorporated by reference.

Alternatives Considered

The EA considers two possible actions: the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action. The No Action Alternative reflects future conditions without the Proposed Action and serves as a basis of comparison for determining potential effects to the human environment.

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, Reclamation would not authorize Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water) to inspect, maintain, or rehabilitate the Santa Clara Conduit and Tunnel, the Pacheco Conduit, or the Pacheco Tunnel and Tank. Reclamation would also not authorize inspection of the Pacheco Tunnel and Pacheco Tank, or repairs and valve replacements at the Pacheco sectionalizing valve vault structure. Valley Water's ability to provide water to both the Santa Clara Valley and the San Benito County Water District would be severely compromised if the Santa Clara Conduit, Santa Clara Tunnel, Pacheco Conduit, or Pacheco Tunnel were to fail. Without valve replacement and repair work at the Pacheco sectionalizing valve, Valley Water would not be able to mitigate potential leaks nor conform with its agreements with Reclamation.

Proposed Action

Valley Water, on Reclamation's behalf pursuant to Contract No. 7-07-20-W0023AB-P, proposes to inspect, maintain, or rehabilitate the Santa Clara Conduit, as well as make valve replacements and acoustic fiber optic (AFO) repairs within the Pacheco sectionalizing valve vault structure and two Pacheco Conduit vaults.

The Proposed Action would be completed in two phases that involve two separate shutdowns to dewater the pipelines over an anticipated two-year period. Phase 1 is expected to begin late spring 2022 and Phase 2 is expected to begin in late summer 2023. Due to unforeseen circumstances or ongoing drought conditions, the timing of implementation of the Proposed Action may be moved back a year or more but would still be implemented with the same phasing and actions as described

in the Final EA. See Section 2.2 of the Final EA for additional details regarding the phased activities of the Proposed Action.

Environmental Commitments

Valley Water shall implement the environmental protection measures listed in Table 3 of the Final EA as well as those measures shown in Appendix B of the Final EA to avoid environmental consequences associated with the Proposed Action. Environmental consequences for resource areas assume the measures specified would be fully implemented.

Comments on the EA

Reclamation provided the public with an opportunity to comment on Draft EA between March 23, 2022 and April 22, 2022. No comments were received.

Findings

Reclamation determined that the Proposed Action activities that occur in Santa Clara County are covered under the Santa Clara Valley Habitat Plan and *may effect, but are not likely to adversely affect* California red-legged frog designated critical habitat. Reclamation also determined that the activities within San Benito County *may affect, but are not likely to adversely affect*, individual endangered San Joaquin kit foxes, individual endangered least Bell's vireos, or critical habitat of the Central California Coast Distinct Population Segment of California tiger salamander. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with Reclamation's determinations (Appendix C of the Final EA). In addition, Reclamation determined that activities in the San Benito County portion of the Proposed Action *may affect, and are likely to adversely affect*, individual federally threatened California red-legged frogs and individual California tiger salamanders (Central California Coast Distinct Population Segment). Reclamation received a non-jeopardy biological opinion from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with reasonable and prudent measures and terms and conditions to further reduce potential impacts of the Proposed Action (Appendix C of the Final EA).

Reclamation determined that the Proposed Action *may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect*, two steelhead Distinct Population Segments and their designated critical habitat. The National Marine Fisheries Service concurred with Reclamation's determination (Appendix D of the Final EA).

Reclamation reached a finding of no historic properties affected by the Proposed Action pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.4(d)(1). On January 21, 2021, Reclamation notified the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) of this finding, and on February 9, 2022, the SHPO responded with no objection.

In accordance with NEPA, Reclamation considered potential short-term and long-term effects of the Proposed Action, both beneficial and adverse. Following are the reasons why the impacts of the Proposed Action are not significant, with respect to the affected environment and degree of effects of the action (40 CFR 1501.3(b)).

1. The Proposed Action will not significantly affect public health or safety (40 CFR 1501.3(b)(2)(iii)).
2. The Proposed Action will not violate federal, state, tribal, or local law protecting the environment (40 CFR 1501.3(b)(2)(iv)).
3. The Proposed Action will not affect any Indian Trust Assets (512 DM 2, Policy Memorandum – July 2, 1993).
4. Implementing the Proposed Action will not disproportionately affect minorities or low-income populations and communities (EO 12898 – February 11, 1994).
5. The Proposed Action will not limit access to, and ceremonial use of, Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 13007 – May 24, 1996 and 512 DM 3 – June 5, 1998).